2.1. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT CONDITIONS

Albemarle has an opportunity. Although the City is growing and changing quickly, it has the opportunity to take action before it experiences the growth-associated problems that other southern cities have already experienced. Acting now to acquire new lands and easements, encouraging pedestrian friendly developments, and supporting healthy lifestyles will help ensure that Albemarle continues to be a good place to live and visit.

Downtown Albemarle, NC

Albemarle has a functioning historical town center complete with a library, visitor center, City Hall, restaurants, schools, a nearby YMCA, clothing stores, a running/vacuum store, antique shops, banks, florists, a farmer's market, and other specialty shops. It also houses the county seat and draws visitors from around the county for work, chores, or pleasure who become pedestrians and consumers while downtown. As the City's commercial growth has evolved around the NC Highway 24/27 Bypass, the traditional business center has remained intact and functional. The majority of the grocery stores are now located away from the city center, along with the general stores and a growing number of the residential units. County, state, and federal service buildings with health, extension, education, and social security services are located at the Stanly Commons, just north of downtown. Keeping or replacing these necessary community ingredients will ensure that downtown Albemarle is self-functioning and not merely a pseudo-town center with novelty stores and municipal worker lunch spots. Every effort must be made to revitalize and continue to develop the inner core of Albemarle's historical downtown. A downtown is the most pedestrian accessible region of a city because the blocks are short, the sidewalks are accommodating, the distances are short, vendors are numerous, roadways are narrow with low traffic speeds, and the conveniences are huge. Denser development is typically associated with limited parking as well, which in turn encourages people to walk.

Revitalization of a downtown can benefit a community because it:

1. Increases the tax base of the community; taking unoccupied or underutilized buildings and converting them to revenue producing businesses.
2. Increases the retail mix; dollars that would be spent elsewhere are circulated locally.
3. Encourages much needed building maintenance and facade rehabilitations.
4. Increases tourism and tourism-related dollars.
5. Promotes the image of downtown as a single entity: a fun, attractive place that serves as the hub of community life.
6. Portrays the image and pride of the entire community. It is an active and attractive downtown image which potential new businesses and industries want when looking for new locations.
7. Instills pride in the community.
8. Creates jobs and investment.

9. Decreases the municipal service costs for an outwardly expanding City Limit.
10. Reduces traffic and its associated health and economic costs.
11. Provides for a self-functioning community where people can live, work, and socialize.

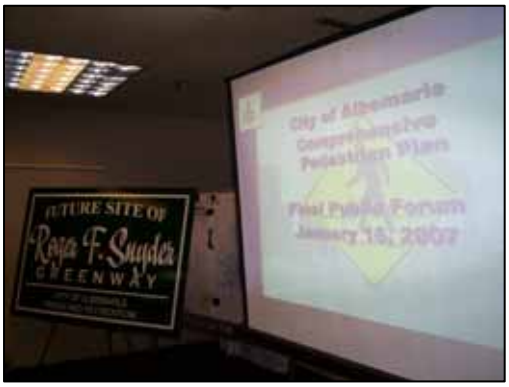
The commercial development style of the Highway 24/27 Bypass both divided downtown Albemarle from southern Albemarle, and guided growth towards an automobile-dependent pattern. Multi-laned highways are very intimidating for pedestrians to walk along, unsafe to cross and can eliminate access to an entire section of the city for foot travelers. Policies for future roadways can make certain that this disconnection for pedestrians does not happen again.

2.2. COMMUNITY CONCERNS, ISSUES, AND NEEDS

The determination of community concerns, issues, and needs is paramount to a successful pedestrian plan. The issues described in the following pages were used as the framework to develop strategies and recommendations to improve the walking environment in and around Albemarle. Specific recommendations resulting from these efforts are described in subsequent sections.

Public Forums

A total of two public forums were held over the course of this project. The first forum was intended to introduce the project, present background information, and seek input from the community regarding pedestrian needs and issues. A second forum was held later in the study to present draft recommendations, based on an assessment of needs through mechanisms including public and stakeholder input, a review of relevant plans and projects, and policies, and field reconnaissance.



January 2007 Public Forum

The first public forum for the Albemarle Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan was held on September 25th at the City Hall Annex. There was an initial presentation at 7:00 PM followed by a comment and open house period until 9:00 PM. Approximately a dozen people attended, many of which were City staff. Seven citizens signed the register.

The second public forum was held on January 16th in the City Council Chambers of the City Hall Annex. The meeting was held from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM, with a 30-minute presentation and a 15-minute question and answer session on the highlights of the plan. Approximately fifteen people attended, with approximately ten of those being citizens and not City staff. The presentation summarized the highlights of the draft plan, including the following elements:

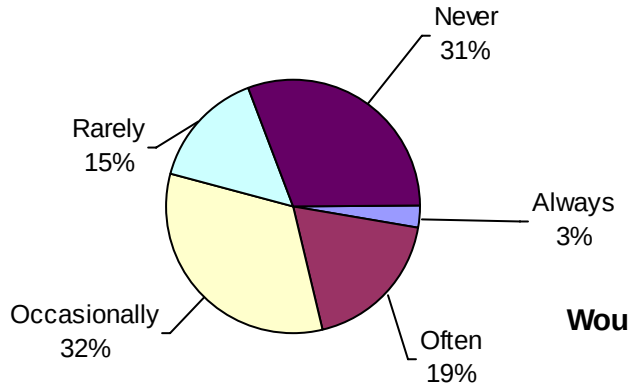
- Purpose of Pedestrian Plan / Benefits of Walking;
- Pedestrian Plan Goals;
- Existing Pedestrian Conditions and Policies;
- Summary of Public Input;

- Deficiencies in Pedestrian Network;
- Development Patterns and Walkability;
- Types of Pedestrian Projects;
- Overall Recommendations;
- Summary of Projects;
- Policy and Program Recommendations;
- Funding Sources;
- Implementation Process; and
- Next Steps.

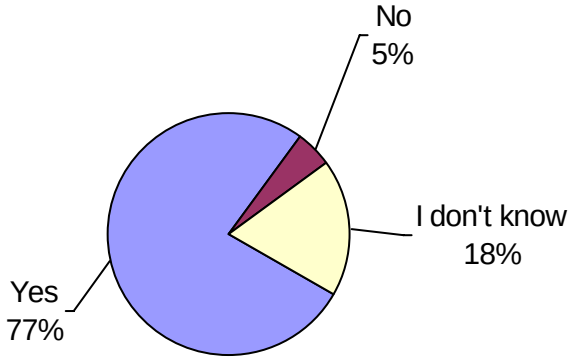
The participants were invited to comment on the highlights of the draft plan to ensure that public feedback is fully incorporated into the findings and recommendations. A question-and-answer session followed the formal presentation. Neither of these forums produced many suggestions, mainly overall comments on how this plan is supported.

In addition, The City of Albemarle distributed approximately 6,500 surveys to some of its utility customers with their bill in December of 2006. 358 surveys were completed and returned (5.5% of the total distribution). In general, the survey found that 22% of the respondents always or often walk for transportation while 46% of the respondents never or rarely walk for transportation. 32% of the respondents said they occasionally walk for transportation. Of those respondents that did walk for transportation, 12% walk as their transportation mode out of necessity rather than because of choice.

I choose to walk for TRANSPORTATION (not recreation) around my community



Would you support public development policies that encourage pedestrian facilities?



56% of the respondents said they often walk for pleasure or exercise, 41% said they occasionally do this, while 3% never walk for pleasure or exercise.

Citizens were asked to choose from a list of obstacles that most often have prevented them from walking in Albemarle in the past. The ten most common obstacles were:

1. No sidewalks or paths 54%
2. Destination is too far away to walk 42%
3. Weather (too hot, cold, rainy, icy, etc.) 39%
4. Concern of crime 37%
5. Heavy or fast traffic 35%
6. It is easier to drive 34%
7. Dangerous or intimidating intersections 31%
8. Travel areas are not well lit 27%
9. Sidewalks are poorly maintained 26%
10. No crosswalks 21%

The five most common walking areas in Albemarle according to this survey are the:

1. Downtown and Pee Dee area including nearby residential roads 41%
2. YMCA facilities 34%
3. Various neighborhood streets not specified in this survey 32%
4. Stanly Commons/hospital area and nearby residential roads 31%
5. Rock Creek Park 31%

77% of the respondents favored development polices that encourage pedestrian facilities, (with an additional 18% being unsure) while 63% of the respondents favored public funding of these facilities (with an additional 29% being unsure).

Further comments on this survey also helped to prepare a plan that provides for the services that concerns the public. Some of the most common comments include:

"We need to develop greenways and bicycle paths."
"We need more sidewalks."
"Please increase police/bike patrol in pedestrian-friendly areas."
"We need to enforce the traffic laws."
"We need more crosswalks."

Questions and complete responses to these surveys and comments submitted at public forums are located in **Appendix A**.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee was formed to help guide the development of this plan. This committee, which met four times over the course of the study, provided insight and ideas that were incorporated into the planning process. Minutes from the Steering Committee meetings are included as **Appendix B**.

Media Contacts

Some light media coverage occurred in the development of this plan including two newspaper articles in the Stanly News & Press and a radio advertisement the day of the second public forum.

Media and advertisements are included as **Appendix C**.

Staff and Agency Concerns and Issues

Representatives from City departments included the Planning, Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Public Housing and the Police Department. The County was represented by the Health Department. NCDOT, the YMCA and Centralina Council of Governments also participated in the Steering Committee for this planning process.

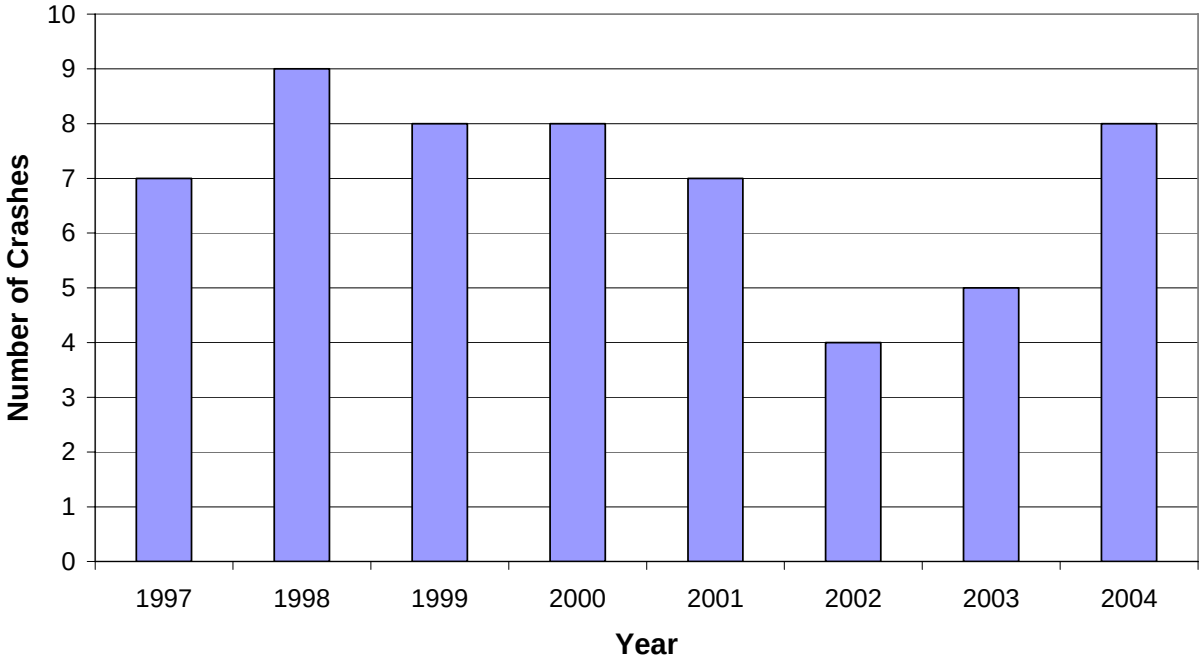
The minutes from the Steering Committee meetings, contained in Appendix B, describe the input and feedback received from these stakeholders. In general, the stakeholders had a big concern for traffic speeds and lack of pedestrian walkways. They agree that pedestrian improvements should focus on areas of greatest need, including low-income areas in which many residents may not have means of transportation other than walking. Another point of emphasis should be modern pedestrian facilities such as shared-use paths along with a transition from conventional zoning to a more mixed-use land use plan.

Planning staff emphasized the need for a pedestrian plan that is realistic, implementable, and cost-effective. The City of Albemarle has implemented some sidewalk projects in recent years, but this document should provide a framework for further improvements.

Pedestrian Crash Data

Recent pedestrian crash data for Albemarle were analyzed using NCDOT's web-based pedestrian crash database (http://www.pedbikeinfo.org/pbcat/) to determine safety trends and identify specific areas of concern with regard to motorist / pedestrian incidents. Using this database, a total of 56 pedestrian crashes was reported between 1997 and 2004 in Albemarle (more recent data were not available). The distribution by year of these incidents is illustrated in Exhibit 2-1. Over the past eight years for which data are available, the number of pedestrian crashes per year has varied between four and nine. These data sets were generally similar to other local, statewide, and national trends. It is important to note that many pedestrian related incidents with vehicles are never reported, and incidents that do not involve a vehicle (because of poor sidewalk maintenance or railroad crossings) are often left unreported as well.

Exhibit 2-1: Total Albemarle Pedestrian Crashes by Year
(Albemarle Pedestrian Crash Data 1997-2004)



It is not easy to say what factors contributed to this range in the number of crashes each year. One might suppose that a high crash rate is the result of poor safety features in the infrastructure, or on the other hand, the more crashes might mean that there are more pedestrians on the road that year. More pedestrians one year might be because of better pedestrian facilities than the previous year, or it might mean that economic conditions are forcing people to walk more. A change in roadway crowding because of development patterns, job market changes, or changes in populations would also play a role. It is important to remember that any number of factors can contribute to these statistics, and not to assume anything because of the data unless considerable study has been put forth.

The following graphs (Exhibit 2-2 & Exhibit 2-3) show the percentage of US citizens at poverty level from 1997-2004 according to the US Census Bureau and the average gasoline costs in the

nation for the same period. From 2000 to the present, the cost in gas fell slightly until 2002 then has generally increased, the poverty rate has grown yearly, and the number of pedestrian crashes in Albemarle has showed a similar dip and then rising pattern from 2000 to 2002 and then to 2004. Some relation might be seen here that shows harder economic times and fuel costs creating more of a need to walk, and thus more pedestrian/automobile collisions. Without more specific information on Albemarle's situation, this is merely an educated guess. This set of economic conditions data only begins to explain any fluctuation in the number of pedestrians that are involved in accidents with motor vehicles in Albemarle.

Exhibit 2-2: Percentages of US Citizens at Poverty Level

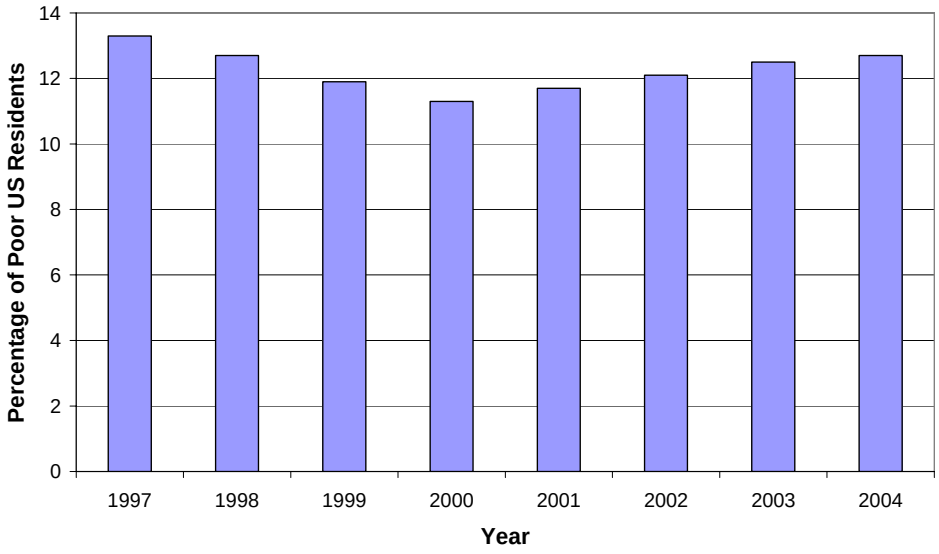
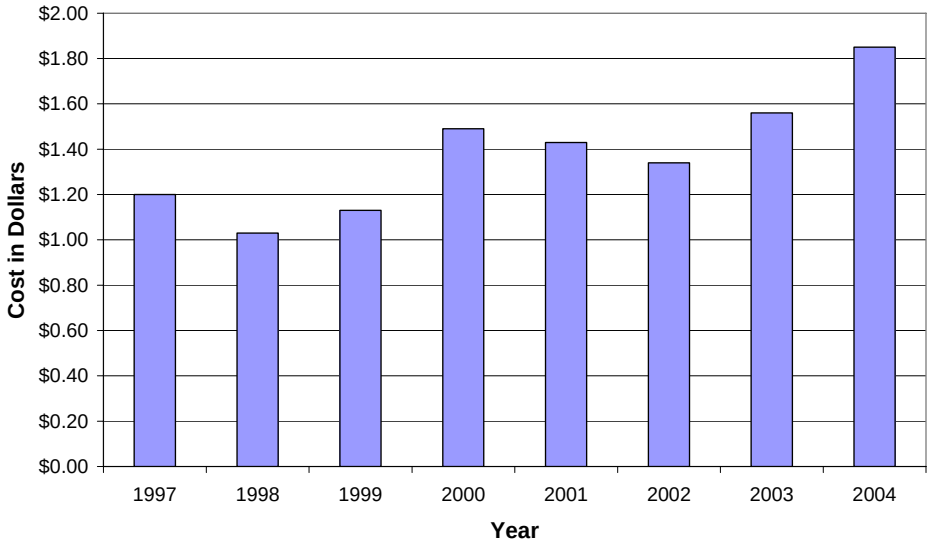


Exhibit 2-3: US Gas Price Change



Crash data were further analyzed to determine specific characteristics of the reported incidents, including aspects related to the incident location, injuries resulting from the crashes, and the circumstances of the crashes. These attributes are illustrated in the following charts.

Exhibit 2-4 identifies any special road features associated with the reported incidents. Of note, fourteen incidents occurred at driveways, while eight more occurred at intersections with four of these being a disabling injury. One crash occurred at a bridge. Although these feature locations only contribute to 41% of the total crashes *(the other crashes in Albemarle graphed earlier were at no particular roadway feature),* it illustrates that conflict points, while not being a large percentage of the roadway, make up a good percentage of the crashes. The fact that the remaining 59% of pedestrian crashes occur elsewhere shows the necessity to evaluate the functionality of all of the existing road features in Albemarle.

Exhibit 2-4: Road Features and Injuries
(Albemarle Pedestrian Crash Data 1997-2004)

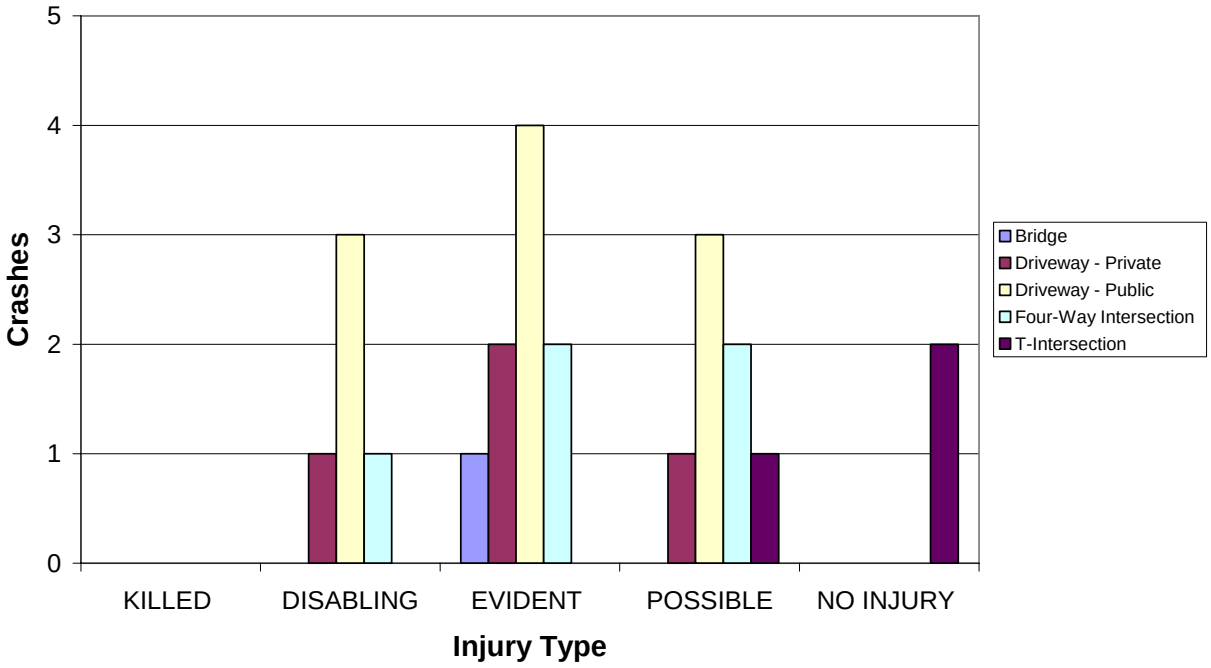


Exhibit 2-5 shows that most pedestrian crashes occurred on local city streets or in public vehicular areas (e.g. parking lots). These statistics are logical because these two areas represent places in which more pedestrians typically can be found. U.S. routes and N.C. routes typically have fewer pedestrians due to the higher-speed nature of the roadways. However, safety is of paramount importance in all areas, including parking lots.

Figure 2-5: Road Classification
(Albemarle Pedestrian Crash Data 1997-2004)

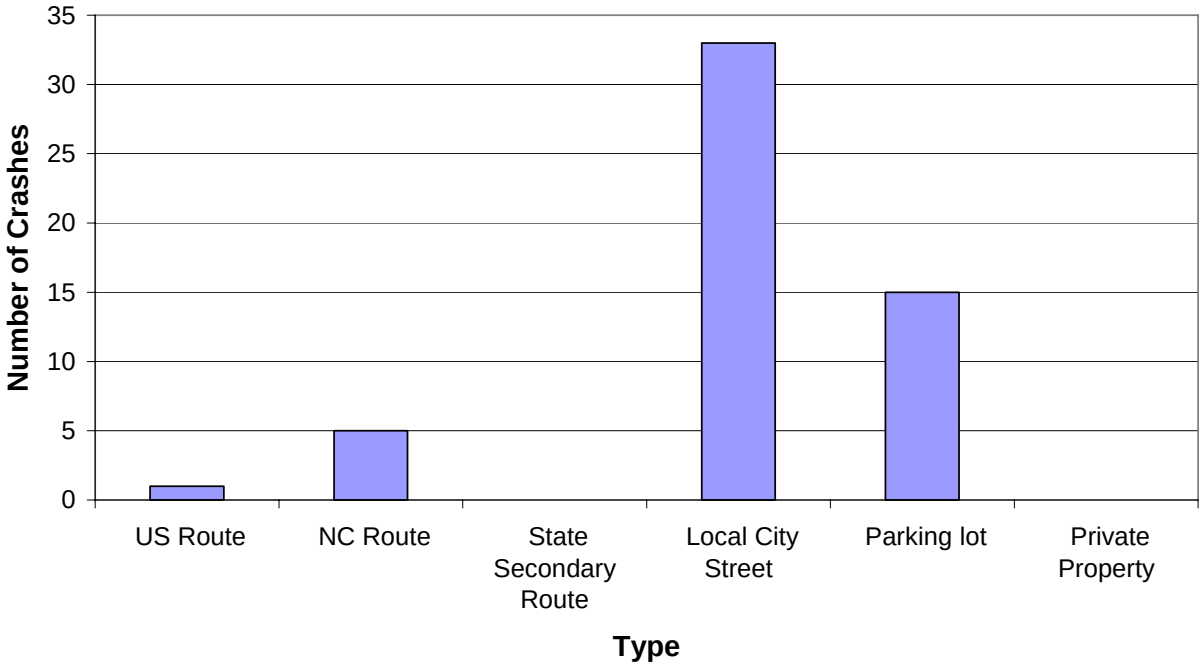
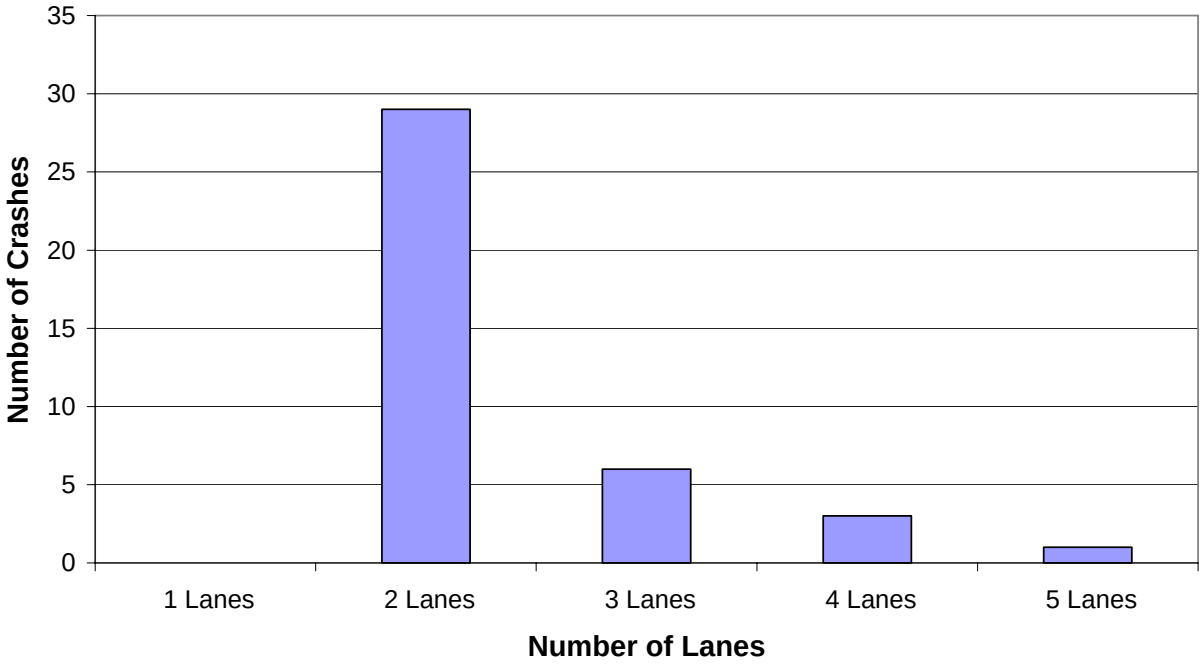


Exhibit 2-6 shows how roadways with fewer lanes have higher pedestrian crash rates (odd numbers being one way or with turn lanes). Most roadways in Albemarle are two laned roadways without medians or exclusive turn lanes; therefore, it is logical that most crashes occurred on these roads. Additionally, these roads are less intimidating to the pedestrian and might attract more foot traffic than wider roadways. Also, users may be more likely to attempt crossing these more narrow roadways, naturally increasing the number of crashes. However, the crashes involving several pedestrian injuries on four-laned roadways show a need to give a safe crossing point such as a pedestrian refuge island fit into a center turn lane so that a pedestrian is not forced to cross two directions of fast traffic at once.

Exhibit 2-6: Road Configuration
(Albemarle Pedestrian Crash Data 1997-2004)



The severity of pedestrian injuries associated with reported incidents between 1997 and 2004 is illustrated in Exhibit 2-7. Two pedestrians were killed, while eleven others had a severe, "disabling" injury.

Exhibit 2-7: Pedestrian Injuries
(Albemarle Pedestrian Crash Data 1997-2004)

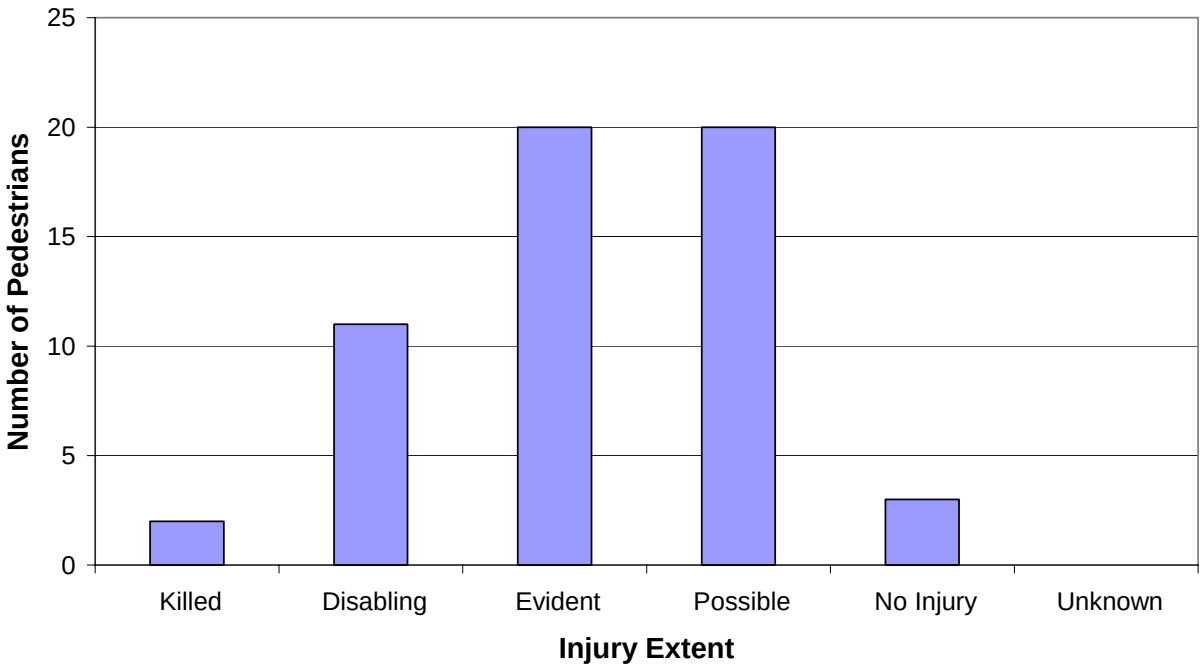
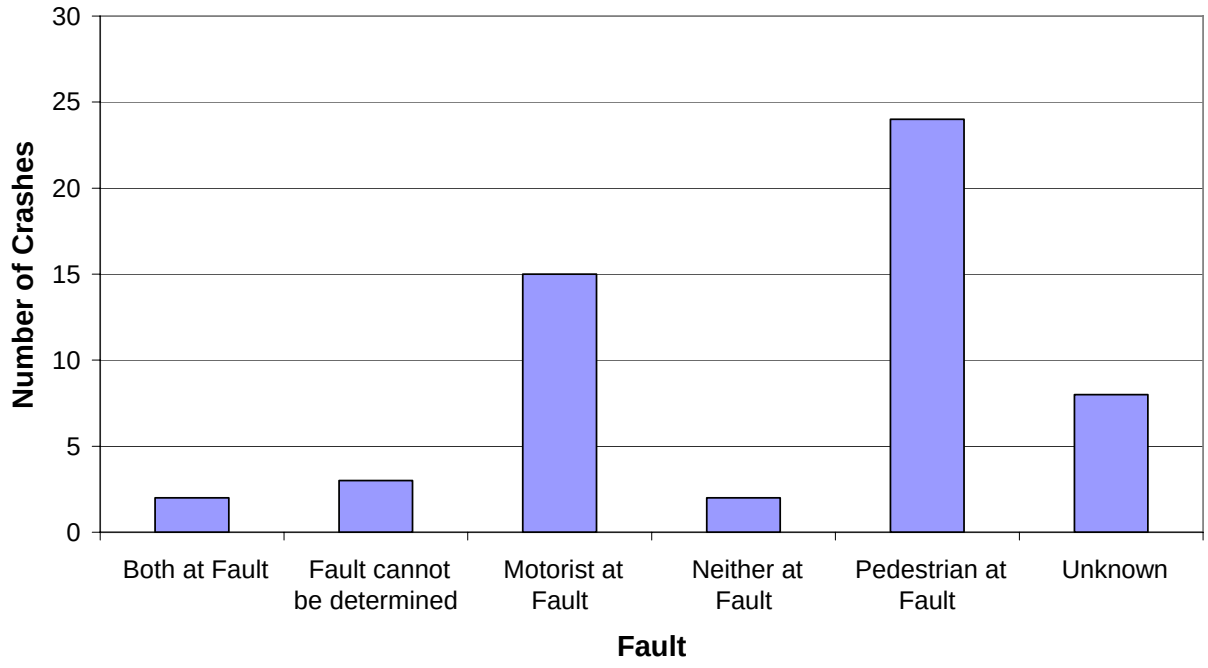


Exhibit 2-8 displays the incident fault for recently-reported crashes. In 24 cases, the pedestrian was at fault, while the motorist was at fault in 15 other cases. These data demonstrate the need to develop safety programs that are oriented to both motorists and pedestrians, and to increase law enforcement for all motorized and non-motorized offenses. It is important to educate motorists on the rights of pedestrians; however, it is just as important to educate pedestrians on the rules of the road and safe walking practices. These data may also show the need to determine what made the pedestrian put themselves at risk in each of these situations. Was it a lack of safe facilities? Was it poorly designed facilities that tempt pedestrians to make unsafe decisions? It is important to know what caused the pedestrian to make their decision before placing complete blame, important to enforce all the laws correctly, and important to educate both the public and the enforcement agencies as to how to interpret the laws.

Exhibit 2-8: Fault
(Albemarle Pedestrian Crash Data 1997-2004)



The time-of-day of recently-reported pedestrian crashes is illustrated in Exhibit 2-9. The highest number of crashes (18) occurred in the later hours after the afternoon commute when many people are making after-dinner errands. The next largest crash rate (15) was in the afternoon school dismissal and commute hours, when a large number of motorists and pedestrians are on the road at one time. However, crashes occurred throughout the day, including midday hours, early morning hours, and late night hours. These data might imply a need for strategies to increase awareness of pedestrians in light traffic (when motorists can drive at higher or at more constant speeds) or in periods of reduced visibility.

Exhibit 2-9: Time of Day of Albemarle Incidents
(Albemarle Pedestrian Crash Data 1997-2004)

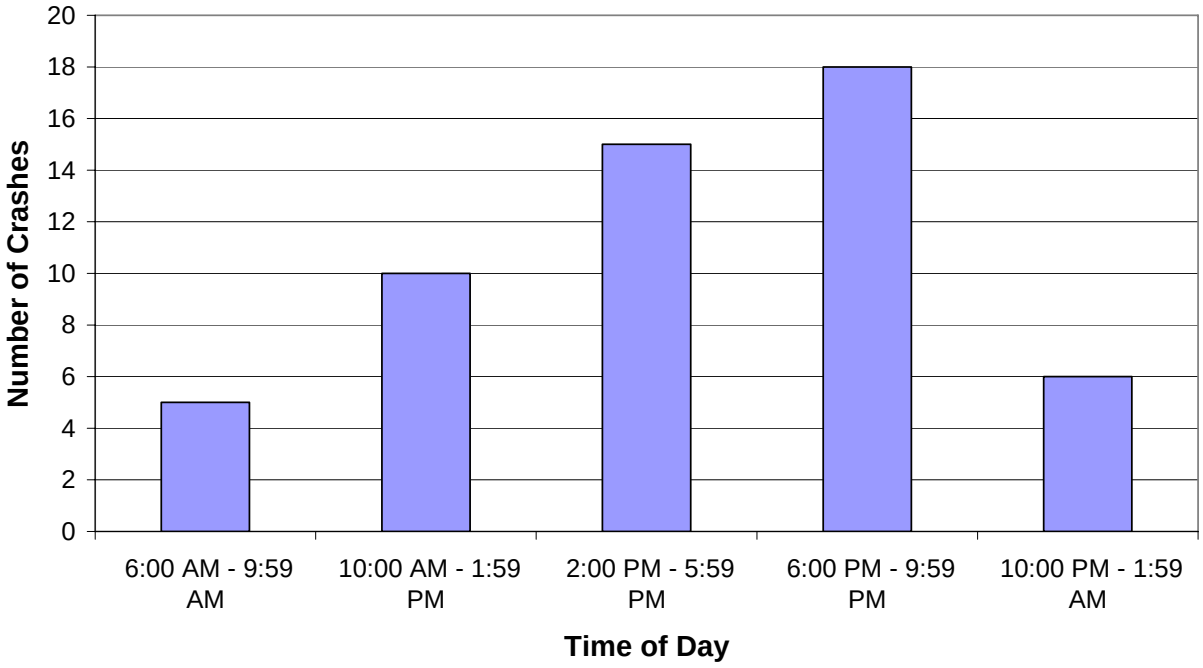


Exhibit 2-10 shows the age of pedestrians involved in the crashes. People of all ages are pedestrians at some point, and as illustrated in the chart, pedestrians of all ages can be involved in incidents. The highest crash rate amongst age groups was the fourteen crashes that occurred among pedestrians of ages 41-50, followed by thirteen for those 10 years and less. The number of citizens over the age of 65 involved in pedestrian crashes is 3% less than the percentage of persons over the age of 65 in Albemarle according to the US census of 2000. Pedestrians in their 40s are the most common group to be involved in a collision with a vehicle. Although a fair amount of accidents involve the younger and older citizens who cannot drive, this spike with middle aged victims shows that this might be an age where some citizens might be walking more for fitness or when some might be struggling financially. One conclusion on a fairly positive note might be that these data show that our young and elderly are indeed out walking, and deserve safe walking areas.

Exhibit 2-10: Age of Pedestrian in Crash
(Albemarle Pedestrian Crash Data 1997-2004)

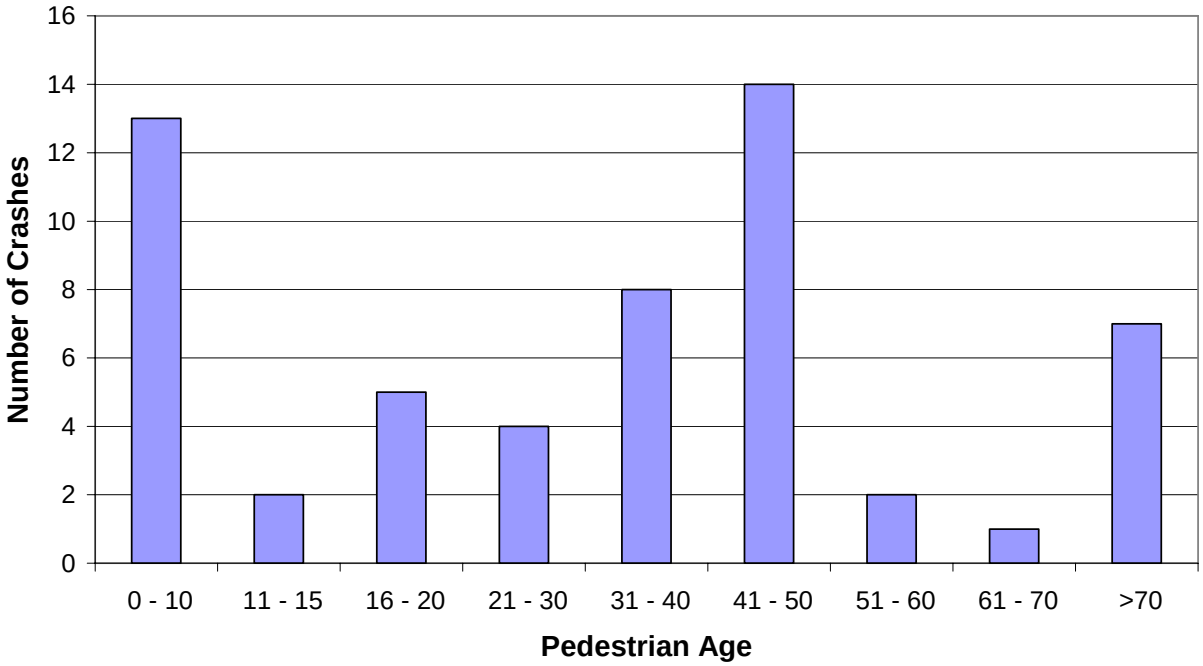


Exhibit 2-11 shows that the motorists involved in pedestrian crashes tended to be younger drivers. Forty-nine percent of crashes that involve a pedestrian are with a driver 29 years or younger. Almost a quarter of the total crashes involve a driver in their teens. In fact, there were more pedestrian/vehicle collisions involving drivers during the first four years of being licensed than from all of the pedestrian-involved accidents combined for drivers aged 60 and up. Older drivers were not significant contributors to these accidents, accounting for roughly the same percentage of accidents as their population while middle-aged drivers had their fair share of collisions. These data help support a need for pedestrian awareness programs aimed at all drivers, with an emphasis on young drivers and drivers who might be experiencing new changes associated with age.

Exhibit 2-11: Age of Motorist in Crash
(Albemarle Pedestrian Crash Data 1997-2004)

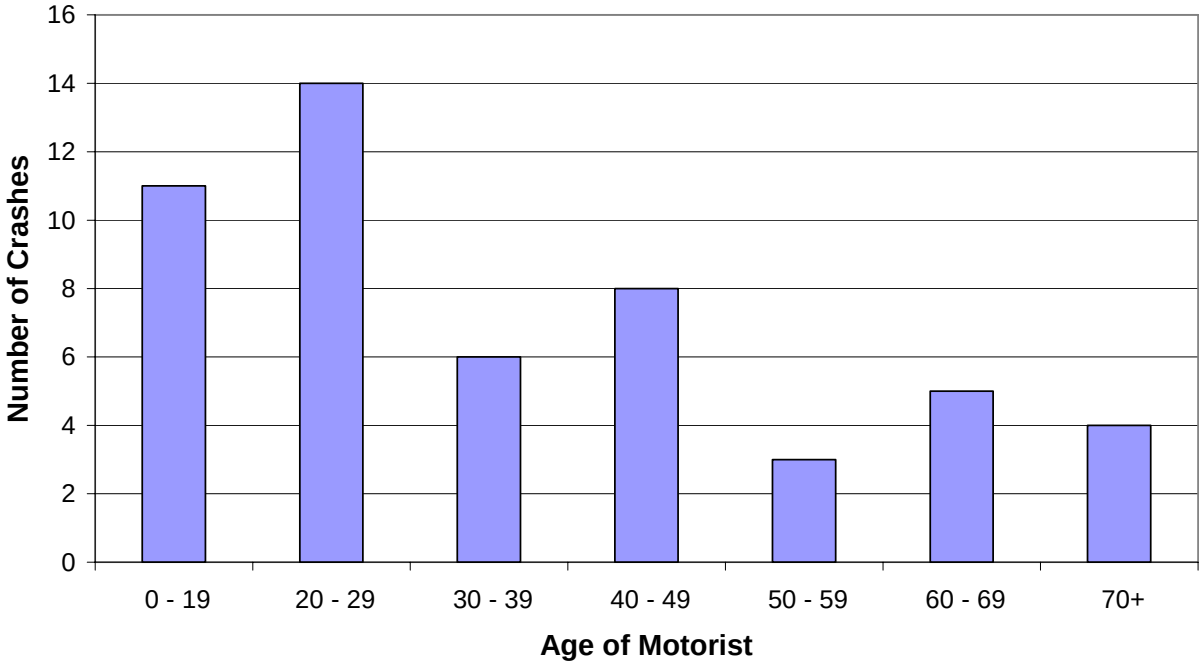


Exhibit 2-12: Albemarle Pedestrian Crashes According to Speed Limit (Albemarle Pedestrian Crash Data 1997-2004)

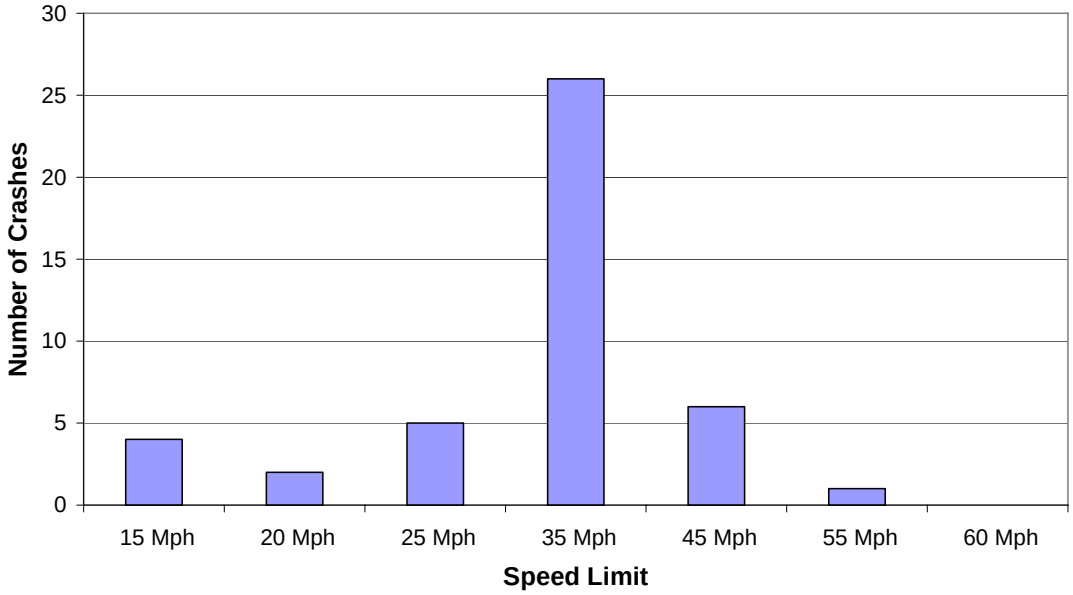


Exhibit 2-12 shows that the vast majority of crashes between automobiles and pedestrians in Albemarle between 1997 and 2004 happened in 35 MPH zones. This is not shocking, since the majority of roads in Albemarle are 35 MPH zones, and these roads are the corridors that consist of a wide range of commercial and residential development that pedestrians are likely to travel to and from.

Exhibits 2-13 through 2-14 show how the injuries sustained to pedestrians in 20 MPH zones were not as severe as the injuries in 25-35 MPH zones. This trend is shown more clearly when we look at the injuries according to the actual speed of the vehicle when it hit the pedestrian.

Exhibit 2-13: Albemarle Pedestrian Injuries with a 20 MPH Speed Limit or Less (1997-2004 Data)

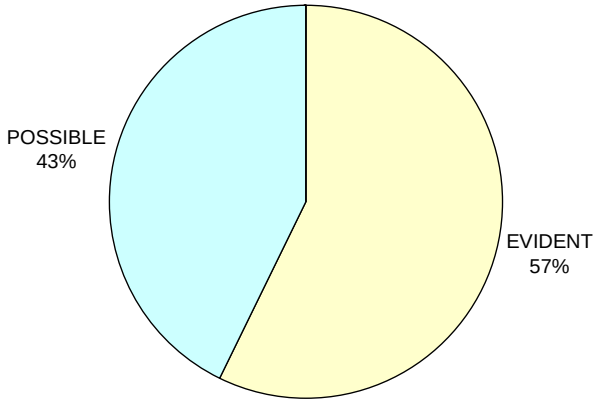
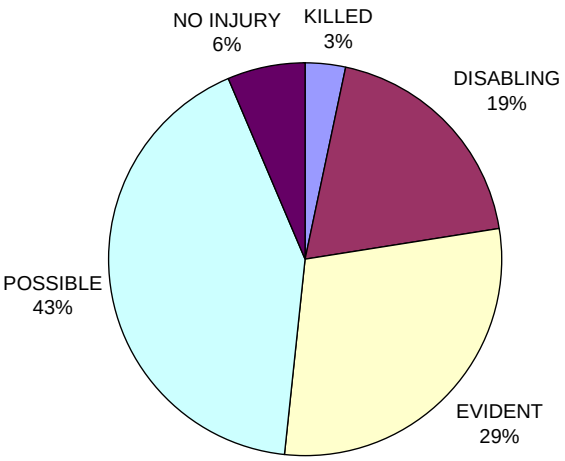


Exhibit 2-14: Albemarle Pedestrian Injuries in a 25 - 35 MPH Speed Limit (1997-2004 Data)



Figures 2-15 through 2-17 show how the severity of injuries to pedestrians increases as the actual speed upon impact increases. Notice how these speeds are not related to speed limit. A pedestrian can be hit by a 35 MPH car in a 20 MPH zone, or be hit by a 20 MPH car in a 35 MPH zone. These data are from NCDOT's 1997-2004 crash records for Albemarle.

Exhibit 2-15: Albemarle Pedestrian Injuries from Vehicle Estimated Speeds of 20 MPH or Less (1997-2004 Data)

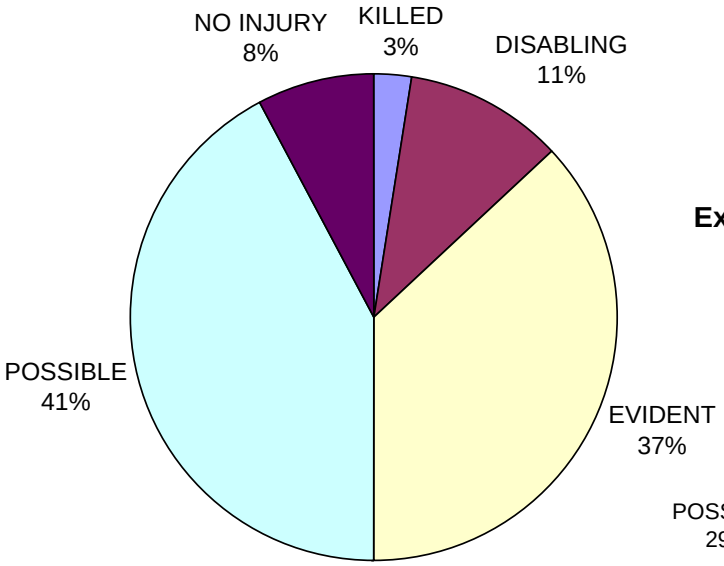


Exhibit 2-16: Albemarle Pedestrian Injuries from Vehicle Estimated Speeds of 21 - 35 MPH (1997-2004 Data)

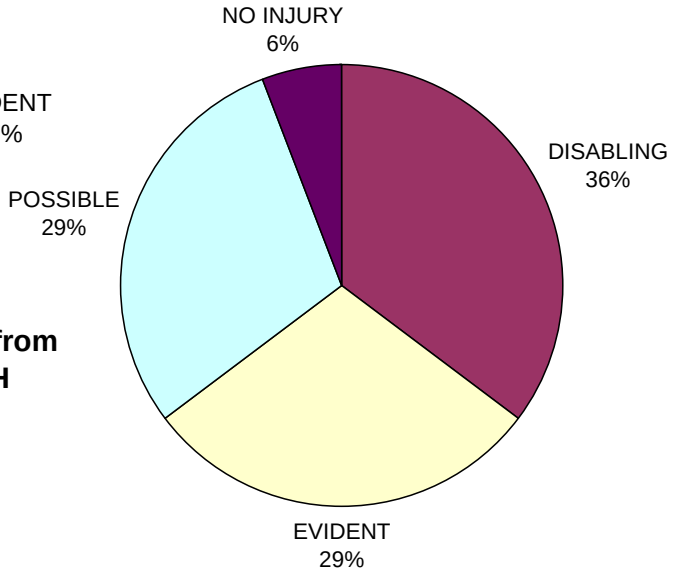
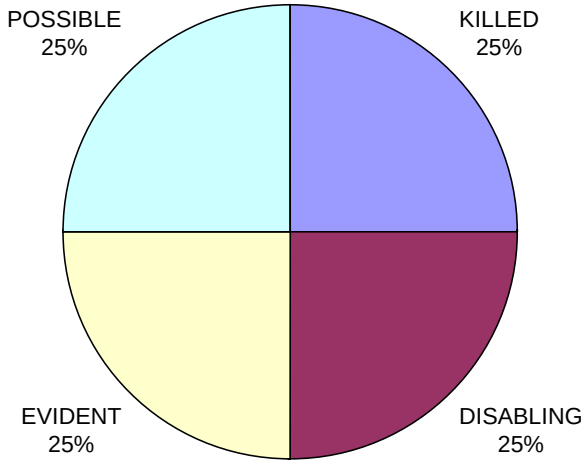


Exhibit 2-17: Albemarle Pedestrian Injuries from Vehicle Estimated Speeds of 36 - 50 MPH (1997-2004 Data)



2.3. EXISTING PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

Pedestrian Friendliness of Local Transportation System

Although Albemarle has a fairly well-developed sidewalk network and well developed intersection treatments in the downtown area and some surrounding neighborhoods, these elements become more limited the further you get from the center of the city. Special signage and signals are used to identify pedestrian crossing areas in a few areas with high levels of walking (Albemarle has several countdown crossing signals around downtown and elsewhere), but intersection treatments such as walk signals for pedestrians are rare elsewhere. Many residential areas designed in the late part of the 20th Century have no pedestrian facilities at all and intersections near NC Highway 24/27 and US Highway 52 were designed to accommodate automobile travel only. This creates unique connectivity challenges.

Children walking near Leonard Street

There appears to be higher levels of walking in neighborhoods where sidewalks are present (especially older neighborhoods with sidewalks on both sides of the street); however, most of this pedestrian activity appears to be recreational in nature and is confined to the specific neighborhood where sidewalks are present. Opportunities for longer-distance walking (i.e. between neighborhoods or to nearby commercial districts) are limited, possibly because of the distance to these areas and the lack of safe connecting paths. When such pedestrian activity occurs outside of these neighborhoods with established sidewalks, walkers are forced to walk in the road or in potentially unsafe areas (e.g. ditches, overgrown areas) adjacent to the roadway.

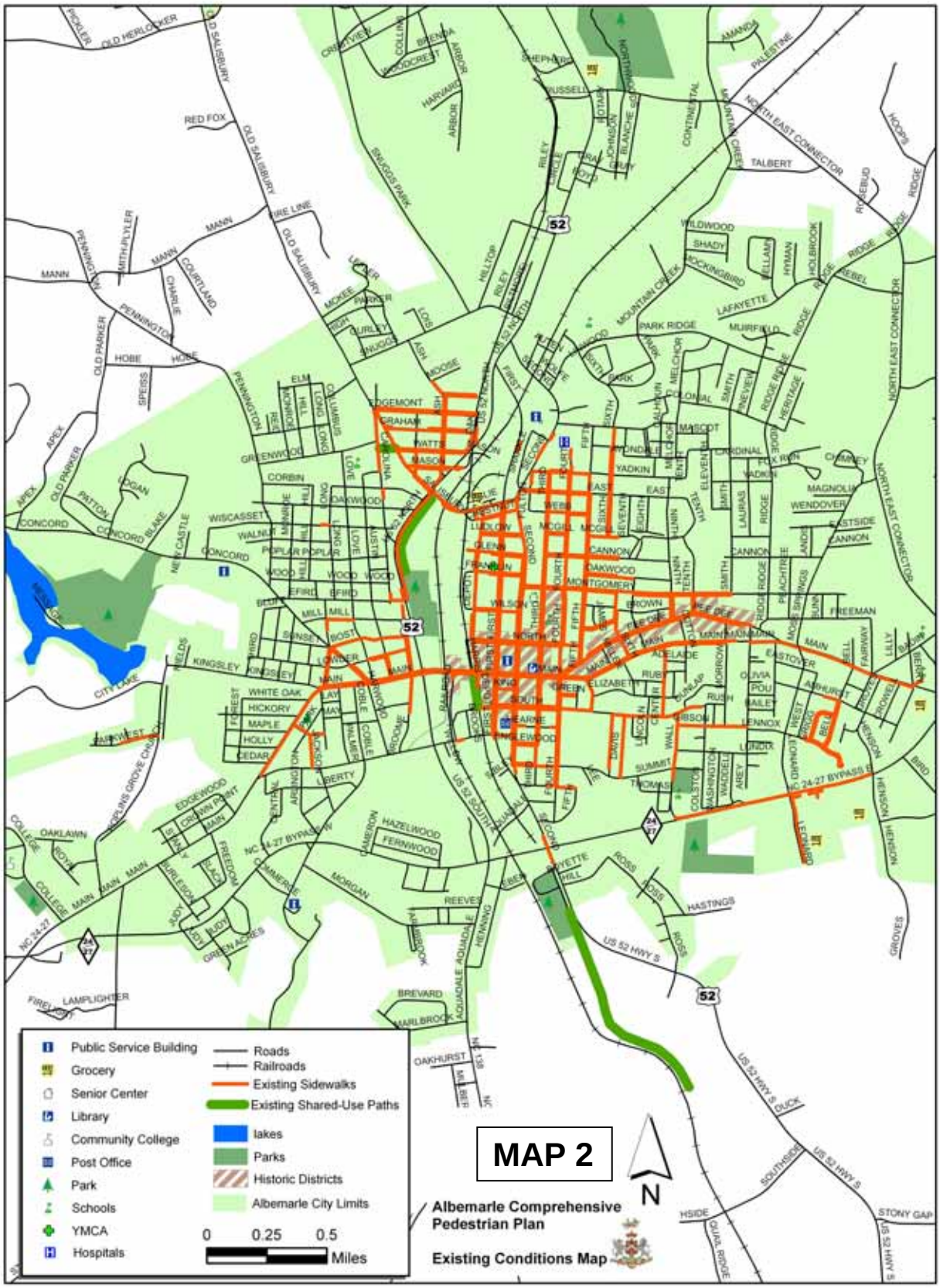
Albemarle has the opportunity to make significant positive enhancements for pedestrians. A growing community awareness of the need for safe and effective pedestrian infrastructure is establishing a climate for improvements, as illustrated by the City's desire to develop a comprehensive pedestrian plan.

Inventory of Existing Facilities

A basic inventory of existing sidewalks was not available until the final review of this plan. Existing roadways and possible destinations in the study area are mapped in **Map 2**.

Wide neighborhood streets - Yadkin

Albemarle's sidewalk network is fairly well-developed in the older downtown area, with sidewalks present along most downtown streets. However, many of the neighborhoods surrounding downtown, as well as those developed in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, have limited sidewalk provisions. Examples of neighborhoods lacking sidewalks include the neighborhoods east of the hospital, Oak Grove, and even the public housing area.


Public Service Building
Grocery
Senior Center
Library
Community College
Post Office
Park
Schools
YMCA
Hospitals
Roads
Railroads
Existing Sidewalks
Existing Shared-Use Paths
lakes
Parks
Historic Districts
Albemarle City Limits
0 0.25 0.5
Miles
MAP 2
N
Albemarle Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan
Existing Conditions Map

Many sidewalks are without curb cuts on Pee Dee Avenue

Most new sidewalks are in good condition; however, some of the older sidewalks outside the downtown area are in need of repair. Crosswalks and curb cuts are needed at most major intersections outside of downtown, but the downtown has pedestrian friendly treatments such as curb extensions, "*No Right When Pedestrian is in the Intersection*" signage, highly visible mid block crossings, countdown signals, and cooperative businesses that provide alternate routes when sidewalk work is underway.

Montgomery Park side path

The study area has several well-developed and well-utilized parks and three shared use paths. City Lake Park, Rock Creek Park, Roosevelt Ingram Park, Montgomery Park, and Chuck Morehead Park are all very popular as recreational walking locations. A side path reaches along Highway 52 from Montgomery Park to Salisbury Avenue, and two segments of rail trail exist; one in downtown and one at the southern end of Rock Creek Park. There is also a half-mile walking path at Albemarle Middle School.

Identification of Deficiencies

Although Albemarle has remained relatively connected, with a decent existing sidewalk network in the center of the City and many neighborhood route options for pedestrian travel, several key deficiencies are apparent, and a number of barriers increase the challenge associated with providing effective pedestrian facilities. These deficiencies are categorized as follows:

- Natural barriers;
- Man-made barriers;
- Safety hazards; and
- Gaps in system.

Natural Barriers

Sewer lines near Summit

The most significant natural barriers in the area are the creeks. Creeks run in every direction through and around Albemarle and these features form a barrier that divides potential origins and destinations of pedestrian trips. Neighborhoods and transportation corridors have been developed around these barriers. In addition, neighborhoods have traditionally been built with these creeks running closely to the rear of the houses, making access to these waterways difficult without entering private property. Utilizing the sewer easements that usually run adjacent to these creeks for public access paths is one way to overcome this barrier.

Man-Made Barriers

Sidewalk along NC 24/27

Several man-made barriers impact walkability in the Albemarle area, the most significant of which is NC Highway 24/27. Not only is this road a formidable physical barrier, but the highway is also a psychological barrier that can deter citizens from walking altogether. There are few, if any, pedestrian-friendly roadway crossings of NC 24/27, and the shoulders are extremely hazardous to pedestrians. There is, however, a sidewalk along much of the north side of this road and a countdown signal at the intersection of Leonard and NC 24/27. Unfortunately, the development patterns and high traffic volumes along this corridor also make walking impractical and stressful. US 52 is another major roadway through Albemarle that presents an obstacle to pedestrian use. The Northeast Connector is another roadway that has design characteristics that make it a deterrent to pedestrians.

Commercial development on US 52 does not connect to each other

The recent development patterns outside of the historical City Center also create a barrier to safe, effective pedestrian connections. Significant commercial development has occurred in these areas in recent years, and most construction has been almost entirely oriented to automobile access. Neighborhoods limit connectivity, and commercial development backs up to residential areas, but restrict pedestrian access. Large parking lots, setbacks and limited connectivity severely reduce the opportunities for walking to and from these destinations. As additional development occurs, site planning should include provisions to make the infrastructure and building access more pedestrian friendly.

Cul-de-sacs near Park Ridge

The railroad tracks in Albemarle create a unique barrier. Because of the limited rail traffic, the trains are not the major barrier at this point; however, the tracks themselves can be an obstacle for disabled or elderly citizens. The tracks also restrict future off-road pedestrian connections because of the expense, liability, and other considerations that need to be taken into account when creating and inviting public access. If a need exists for connectivity, pedestrians will use railroad corridors whether official infrastructure exists or not.

Safety Hazards

Although the Albemarle area has many key sidewalk connections in place, the lack of sidewalks in specific areas is a significant safety hazard. For example, Badin Road has notable pedestrian traffic from the nearby schools, but no sidewalks. The Yadkin and Park Ridge area have notoriously wide lanes, fast traffic, and no sidewalks. Many of the middle to higher income residents in these areas

A popular crossing location on NC 24/27

walk regularly, but are forced to walk in the street because there are no pedestrian facilities. The immediate area surrounding the hospital has sidewalks on some roads, but has limited safe connections to popular nearby destinations like Stanly Commons and Harris Teeter. Remarkably, the most used pedestrian area around the public housing area has no sidewalks and one of the riskiest and most highly-used road crossings in the City.

Many potential pedestrian destinations are located along NC Highway 24/27, but heavy traffic volumes, limited pedestrian access from the rear, and strip-developed shopping areas limit pedestrian opportunities. While options to improve these conditions are limited, the City should take steps to ensure that future commercial development provides more pedestrian-friendly infrastructure.

Gaps in System

As mentioned above, gaps in the existing sidewalk and crossing network present a safety hazard for pedestrians walking in these areas. Furthermore, these gaps discourage walking in these areas for anyone other than those who must walk. A key focus area for pedestrian facility recommendations as part of this study is to identify these critical gaps in the system. Gaps are evident in areas such as the following:

- Small areas in and around downtown;
- Pee Dee Avenue and adjoining neighborhoods north to Park Ridge Road;
- Low income neighborhoods south and east of downtown;
- All roadways surrounding schools;
- The commercial developments along NC Highway 24/27 and US Highway 52.

A popular connection leading to NC 24/27

2.4. CURRENT USAGE

No formal pedestrian counts have been conducted in Albemarle; however, the survey discussed earlier and anecdotal evidence indicate that there is a growing concern for pedestrian safety. During the field investigations for this project, a moderate number of pedestrians were observed. Most pedestrian traffic occurs around the downtown area because it has compact development and a well-developed sidewalk network. However, a significant number of pedestrians walk in areas without an extensive sidewalk and crosswalk network, such as areas along commercial strips such as East Main Street, Highway 24/27, and US 52. According to the 2000 U.S. Census 7,365 workers age 16 and over live in Albemarle. Of these workers, 170 (2.5%) reported that they walk to work. The national average of workers who walk to work is 2.9%.